

The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina

Manisha Sinha

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The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina Manisha Sinha In this comprehensive analysis of politics and ideology in antebellum South Carolina, Manisha Sinha offers a provocative new look at the roots of southern separatism and the causes of the Civil War. Challenging works that portray secession as a fight for white liberty, she argues instead that it was a conservative, antidemocratic movement to protect and perpetuate racial slavery.

Sinha discusses some of the major sectional crises of the antebellum era--including nullification, the conflict over the expansion of slavery into western territories, and secession--and offers an important reevaluation of the movement to reopen the African slave trade in the 1850s. In the process she reveals the central role played by South Carolina planter politicians in developing proslavery ideology and the use of states' rights and constitutional theory for the defense of slavery.

Sinha's work underscores the necessity of integrating the history of slavery with the traditional narrative of southern politics. Only by taking into account the political importance of slavery, she insists, can we arrive at a complete understanding of southern politics and the enormity of the issues confronting both northerners and southerners on the eve of the Civil War.



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